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Magyar Királyi Ferenc
József Tudományegyetem

Appeal...Royal Hungarian
Francis Joseph Univ. ...

[Budapest]

[1920]

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Aspect of the Royal Hungarian Francis Joseph
University to the university of the civilized
world. Budapest, 1920.
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Title of the President

Appeal

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of the Royal Hungarian Francis Joseph University to the Universities of the civilized world.

Universities search for and proclaim truth, as it manifests itself in nature and is represented in the world of values by cultural progress. No outside power, no authority can hinder them in this; that is why the investigation and the proclaiming of Truth is free. "Science and its teaching are free."

The high vocation of the Universities unites their professors, the confessors of this truth into one powerful and invisible organism extending over all the civilized world, so that each of its members must share in the joys and the sorrows of the other members and must feel bound to support and assist them in their troubles.

It is the consciousness of this solidarity which prompts the suffering and persecuted professors, rector and senate of the University of Kolozsvár, Hungary, to turn to you, their colleagues and comrades of the Universities of the world, and especially of those of the Entente Powers and of the neutral states, with the request that you may come to our aid and use every means in your power to obtain that our University, taken from us by the Roumanians in defiance of every principle of justice and without the slightest cultural justification, may be given back to us; and that we the forcibly ejected and for the most part banished professors may be allowed to return to our Alma Mater and to devote ourselves once more to our holy calling in the service of truth.

We support our request by the following facts and considerations:

Our University can only look back on a short existence of half a century; it is one of the youngest Universities, but it stands on a ground made sacred by great cultural traditions.

Our Corpus Juris begins with the following characteristic words of our first king, Stephen the Saint: "Sicut enim ex diversis partibus provinciarum veniunt hospites, ita diversas linguas et consuetudines, diversaque documenta et arma secum ducunt, que omnia regna ornant et magnificam aulam, et perterritant exterorum arrogantiam." (Cap. VI §. 2.) "Nam unus linguae uniusque moris regnum imbecille et fragile est." (§. 3.)

The same spirit is breathed by the other laws of our kings of the House of Árpád.

In 1544 the Legislature of Transylvania, sitting in Torda, and at that time independent of the Habsburg dynasty, enacted religious liberty as the first of all the legislatures of Europe. The first Catechism in the Roumanian language appeared on the stimulation of the Calvinist Magyars in 1577, as well as a Roumanian translation of the Psalms. On the order of Prince Gabriel Bethlen, Jerononah Silvester translated several books of the New Testament into Roumanian. Prince George Rákóczi established the first Roumanian printing office in Gyulafehérvár in 1638 and introduced the Roumanian liturgical language in the Roumanian church service instead of the Slavic language formerly used.

At the high school in Gyulafehérvár, famous in all Europe, there worked and taught, invited by Gabriel Bethlen, the bel-esprit and archeologist, Martin Opitz, the professor Alstadt of Helmstadt, and his friend, the philosopher, Bisterfeld, who was a friend also of Comenius. John Csere of Apáczsa, whose work in the field of socialpolitics and socialpedagogics is not sufficiently recognized to this day, sketched in his inaugural speech in Kolozsvár, the plan of a high school, in which he developed the high importance of the exact sciences, in especial of mathematics.

It is on such historical ground that our University in Kolozsvár was erected.

After scarcely fifty years of existence it can, both as regards the number of the professors and students, and as regards its buildings, institutes and scientific equipment, measure itself with the best; and this is owing to the generosity of the Hungarian State, ever ready for sacrifices in the interest of culture, as well as to that of the Magyar population of Transylvania.

The number of the professors — apart from readers, lectures and the rest of the auxiliary personnel — was in 1917—18:

in the faculty of law	21
in the faculty of medicine	32
in the faculty of arts	35
in the faculty of mathematics and natural science	22
total:	110

The number of the students was over 2,000.

The expenditure of the Hungarian State for the University

was	3,334,487 crowns,
plus the sum of	953,688 "

(being the total of the sums of 194,119 crowns of students fees and of 759,569 crowns of surgery and dispensary charges, etc. paid to the University.)

total: 4,288,175 crowns.

The hospitals are, according to the judgment of foreign experts, exemplarily built. The library of the University shows a new type of library buildings, in which the book-stores, the reading-room, the localities of the personnel and a lecturing hall are united, and in which the new patent devices of the bookshelves and the reading and writing tables has often surprised even experienced foreign librarians. The zoological institute, the magnificent creation of professor Apáthy, is, not only in regard to its Museum, but also to its biological section, the pride of the University.

And this University, founded by the Hungarian State and supported and enriched by the Magyar population of Transylvania through its Museum Society, this University whose professors are almost without exception Magyars and of whose students 83 per cent were Magyars, only 9.8 per cent being Roumanians; this University situated in a town with an almost exclusively Magyar population (84 per cent) was violently torn from us by the Roumanians on the 12-th of May 1919, and turned into a Roumanian institute and this robbery is to be sanctioned on the 1-st of February 1920, by a festival of inauguration in the presence of the King and Queen of Roumania.

In the name of Rightousness, of Culture and Progress we protest against this outrage and its proposed solemn sanctioning.

This outrage is emphasized by the preliminaries which led up to it and the method in which it was carried out.

Immediately after the Roumanian National Assembly of the 1-st of December 1918, which declared the annexation by Roumania of Transylvania and parts of Hungary, the head of the educational department of the Roumanian Governing Council, Mr. L. Goldis, announced the purposed Roumanization of the University.

To gain a pretext for the closing and the seizure of the University, the youthful and hotblooded students were provoked to revolt.

On Christmas Eve the royal Roumanian army entered Kolozsvár at the bidding of the Entente to occupy it as an important strategic point. On the 31-st of December the rector of the University was escorted to headquarters by soldiers armed with bayonets, on the plea that he had not complied with an alleged summons which he had never received. On the 2-nd of January 1919, general Gherescu declared to him that he would immediately have the University closed if any meeting whatsoever were to be held in its precincts and if the students should exhibit a rebellious temper.

Many attempts were made to provoke this temper, as for example, when the students were prevented from returning to their homes, in spite of all the efforts of the rector, who supplied them with travelling certificates and permits (in the Roumanian language),

in conformity with the wishes of the Roumanian military and civil authorities. The students thus prevented from leaving the town, received by order of the Roumanian authorities no postal remittances whatever, so that their financial situation would have been desperate, if they had not been assisted by a relief fund amounting to more than 300,000 crowns collected on the instigation of the rector. In spite of the hardships they were forced to endure, the students did not rebel; but the rector was accused of bolshevism by general Folban because he had come to their assistance.

After this, other and still more drastic measures were employed to incite the students to revolt. Many of them were arrested without any cause and whipped till the blood ran. Even a professor of the University, who had never taken part in politics but had lived exclusively for his science was beaten with rifle-butts and stabbed with a bayonet because he remonstrated with a Roumanian soldier for having maltreated his brother, whereafter he was escorted to the police station and locked up in a room with twenty others, eight of whom were students. He made complaint to an officer, who promised his immediate release, but soon after vanished and did not return, while the very same night the prisoners were one by one stripped and whipped with thongs. The professor was saved from this treatment only by the bayonet wound which he had received previously in the day. Even women and young girls were arrested and grossly maltreated for no other cause than that they had worn Magyar national dress or ribbons in the Magyar colours.

Notwithstanding all this, the 2,000 students managed to keep cool and applied themselves only to their studies so as to give no cause for the closing of the University.

At first the Roumanian Governing Council shunned a direct attack on the University, knowing as it did that the representatives of the Entente Powers, generals Berthelot and Pathé, and the highly cultivated colonel Saugnier, had given us the most solemn assurances that the autonomy of the University would not be touched and that the professors would be allowed to continue their work unmolested.

But soon even this consideration lost its restraining influence. The Entente Powers were no longer respected by the Roumanians whom they had helped to their victories.

The head of the educational department of the Roumanian Governing Council appointed a Roumanian student of our University as controller of one of our hospitals, with entire disregard of the opinion of the medical faculty, and enlarged the sphere of the assistant teacher of the Roumanian language. The respective faculties tried to defend themselves against these attacks by directing the appointed functionaries to apply for their posts in the regular way. The result of this was that soon after the prefect of the town

communicated to the University a decree of the head of the educational department, ordaining that the next term was not to commence till the 20-th of March. The University privately informed the prefect, who was well disposed towards us, that it had already commenced the term on the 1-st of February.

After these preliminary skirmishes there ensued, on the 7-th of April, the real attack on the University. The prefect communicated to the rector a decree of the head of the educational department summoning all the professors, functionaries of the University to take the Roumanian oath of allegiance. Those who complied with the summons were to be allowed to remain at their posts provided that they pledged themselves to learn within 3 years sufficiently the Roumanian language well to be able to lecture in it: those who refused were to be dismissed without a pension; they might, however, remain at their posts till the end of the term (end of June). Officially the decree was to be communicated to the University on the following day. The rector pointed out that, while the territorial question was unsolved, no such oath could with justice be exacted of anyone.

His words seem to have carried some weight, for the decree was not communicated to the University, and the prefect left next day for Nagyszeben. The assault was averted for the nonce.

But a month later, on the 10-th of May, it was renewed in a severer and official form. A decree of the head of the educational department summoned all the professors to take the oath of allegiance to the Roumanian state under the conditions mentioned above. Those who refused were to lose their situation and all rights appertaining thereto, might however, remain at their posts till the end of the supplementary term planned by the University, i. e. till the end of August, their salaries being fixed and paid them by the Roumanian Government. The answer was to be delivered by the 12-th of May 10 a. m.

The senate of the University was prepared for the attack and laid the project of a reply before the four faculties, with the intimation, that each professor was to be questioned as to his intentions concerning the taking of the oath, but not influenced or persuaded in any way.

In the projected reply the senate protested against the seizure of the University and against the administration of the oath, referring to the fact that the University being founded, maintained and developed by the Hungarian State and as such the property of the latter, its professors, as the appointed functionaries of this State were pledged to it by their oath; referring further, to the circumstances that the Peace Conference had not as yet decided the territorial question of Transylvania, and that therefore the adminis-

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tation of the Roumanian oath had no justification; that the representatives of the Entente Powers, (general Berthelot, Pathe, etc.) had guaranteed the unmolested activity of the University; and that according to the articles of the Hague Convention the authority of the legitimate power having passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter has to respect, unless "absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country." (Convention II. 1899, and Convention III. 1907. Annex: Regulations respecting the laws and Customs of war on land, Section III. Article 43.) so that the occupying power must on no account invite functionaries to remain at their posts, or compel them to take any pledge or oath. (*Manuel de droit international à l'usage des officiers*. — Bonfils: *Manuel de droit des gens*, 1174). finally that, according to article 56 of the Annexe of the Hague Convention: "The property . . . of institutions dedicated to religion, charity and education, the arts and sciences, even when state property, shall be treated as **private property**. All seizure or destruction of institutions of this character is forbidden."

Before the University passed a decision respecting this reply, each of the professors was questioned separately, whether or not he was willing to take the Roumanian oath of allegiance? There was not one who answered in the affirmative, so that the reply was unanimously accepted. It was dispatched with an accompanying letter written by the rector in which he informed the prefect that the professors intended to remain at their posts till the close of the supplementary term, that is, till the end of August, provided that the autonomy and the freedom of the University were respected and the present professorial staff was not interfered with.

Within half-an-hour of the dispatch of this reply, the University was surrounded by Roumanian troops, who guarded all the doors of entrance. Simultaneously there arrived the Roumanian commissions which had been kept in readiness against this contingency, and which took possession, in the name of the Governing Council of Nagyszeben, of the University, the several faculties, the offices, the curatorium, the library and all the institutes and seminars, giving as reason for their proceeding that "the professors and lecturers of the University had refused to take the oath of allegiance to His Majesty, the King of Roumania and the Governing Council of Nagyszeben." (Decree no. 4.336—1919.)

The rector protested against the seizure on the strength of the reasons stated in the reply, and declared that he would only yield to force. This was applied, whereupon the leader of the commission, prefect Porutiu, announced that from noon of that day on, the

activity of the University was suspended and the professors dismissed.

Thus were the professors deprived, within twenty-four hours, of all their rights as well as of their means of subsistence; and thus were the students robbed of the fruits of their labours. — the possibility of passing the examinations necessary for their future careers, as well as of the supplementary term so needed by those whom the war had prevented from completing their studies.

Such an end to the life of our University we had not been prepared for!

Even the Roumanians might have been expected to respect a University which, under the most trying circumstances, and in spite of the strongest provocation, had quietly and conscientiously continued the performance of its duties: a University whose unmolested activity had been repeatedly and in the most solemn manner guaranteed by the representatives of the Entente and whose inviolability was assured by internationally accepted provisions and conventions.

Even if, unmindeful of the fact that they owe their victories to the Entente Powers, and not to their own valour, they disregard the covenants and ethical considerations recognized by the latter, one might suppose that they would keep their own word, given two days earlier, according to which even those professors who refused to take the oath would be allowed to continue their activities till the end of August.

Even this violation of faith and right, however, could be endured — if absolutely necessary — in case the seizure of the University and the dismissal of the professors had been effected, as in Strassburg, by a nation which stood on the same grade of culture. But the Roumanians have no justification, either from their point of view of their numbers, or from that of their cultural level, for what they have done.

In Transylvania their numerical majority is very slight as compared with the numbers of the other nationalities (55 per cent as against 43 per cent Magyars and Germans), while in the rest of the claimed territories extending as far as the river Tisza, they are in a minority (39 per cent Roumanians against 50.8 per cent Magyars and Germans).

But a crude, numerical majority can never give a people the right to exercise dominion over other peoples. In the sight of civilized states, as in that of the world of science, only a **cultural superiority** can give this right. **And the Roumanians are culturally vastly inferior to the other nationalities of Transylvania.**

Of 100 Roumanians can read and write	32·8
" " Magyars " " " " " " " "	70·9
" " Germans " " " " " " " "	87·9
Of 100 Roumanians absolved a middle school	0·37
" " Magyars " " " " " " " "	2·06
" " Germans " " " " " " " "	2·15

3. Of 100 Romanians are urban inhabitants	55.7
" " Magyars	22.40
" " Germans	24.07

	Romanians	Bulgars	Germans
manufacturing	26·7	51·7	16·6
commerce	15·8	59·7	22·0
commercial officials	12·6	63·3	22·5
lawyers	26·0	55·0	8·8
elementary school teachers	31·8	52·7	12·5
middle school teachers	9·1	74·4	16·5
doctors	12·8	61·5	25·1
chemists	5·4	58·2	36·4
journalists	18·6	72·1	9·3
civil engineers	9·2	65·3	22·4

5. Of 100,000 persons are employed

If we take the total number of persons employed in intellectual occupations, exclusive of the ministers of religion, as the number of these depends on the number of the parishes, and the greater part of the Roumanian priests are not properly qualified for their office, we come to the result that

Magyars	13.589	66.1 per cent
Germans	3.145	15.3 " "
Roumanians	3.820	18.6 " "

The Romanians came to us as peace-makers sent by the Entente Powers; and they behaved from the first minute of their entry as enemies, disregarding the provisions of the Hague Convention recognized by the latter, Rumanizing the public services, seizing the Hungarian state-schools and the University; unlawfully demanding the oath of allegiance of all state functionaries, without awaiting the decisions of the Peace Conference; dismissing, and soon after banishing, all who refused to take it; driving the Magyar inhabitants of the Magyar towns not only from these towns, but beyond the borders of that Greater Rumania which they dream of; substituting for the historical names of these towns, and of their streets and squares, Rumanian names; destroying all the Magyar sign-boards and compelling the Magyar shopkeepers to replace them with Rumanian ones; forcing the Magyar population, and the heads of the Catholic and Protestant churches, to celebrate all the Rumanian festivals with the ringing of bells and the beflagging of the churches; demolishing or damaging all the statues and monuments which commemorate incidents in Magyar history; and maintaining their authority chiefly by flogging and whipping. The commissions which took possession of the University were composed for the most part of middle school teachers and university students. A lecturer became rector of the University and the deans were appointed from among school teachers and university assistants. The University itself was profaned by a three months' holiday course, in which the teachers of elementary schools received the qualification of middle school teachers. As to the operations performed by the new clinical profes-

sors, incredible rumours are afloat concerning them, so that it is no wonder if the hospitals, previously full to overflowing, are gradually left without patients. On the other hand the undischarged cases and documents increase more and more in the offices of the local government, in the juridical courts, and the central departments, for want of a trained personnel.

On the pretext of combating bolshevism, this acute sickness of our times, the Romanians have devastated Hungary, robbed it of its live-stock, of its agricultural and industrial implements, its means of transport, and its provisions, and would have condemned the country to a slow and lingering sickness that could not but have ended fatally if the civilized nations of the West had not come to its assistance.

It cannot be to the interest of the Entente Powers, in so far as they really desire a lasting peace, to make of Hungary, which for a thousand years has been a bulwark against the devastating forces of the East, a new Balkan territory, in which the arms of rebellion will be seized, not by the rude and savage populace, but by those who had been driven to revolt by their moral and spiritual sufferings. Nor can it be to the interest of these civilized Western nations that on the innermost outskirts of Occidental civilization, a state should be formed in which an inferior people, still partly belonging to the oriental church and imbued with oriental ways of thinking, would exercise dominion over the champions of Western culture, morals and religion, of Western ideals, in fact; nor that this people should rob us of our greatest treasure, our University, which is the living focus of these ideals.

Therefore we appeal to you, our comrades, who are at one with us in the idea which lies at the basis of all Universities, we appeal to the Prometheus fire in you which dares all for the sake of the eternal light, and to that divine force of love which penetrates and sucks into the object of study with the intention of discovering the essence and the laws of existence and the values which hallow and consecrate it, and of embracing and penetrating, on the strength of the discovered truths, the entire universe, and the intellectual and cultural life of Mankind.

We appeal to you and trust that you will find ways and means to come to our assistance, and to protest with us against the robbery — so soon to be sanctioned — of our University, and to give us back to our beloved alma mater for which we have lived hitherto and wish to live also in the future.

Budapest, January 1920.

*Rector and Senate
of the Royal Hungarian Francis Joseph
University. (Kolozsvár.)*

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